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SUBJECT: CHAD: PRESIDENT'S CALL FOR "DIALOGUE" REJECTED

REF: NDJAMENA 826

SUMMARY:

¶1. (SBU) The Chadian President has instructed his Council of Ministers to take the initiative for a "Chado-Chadian, internal political dialogue" to allow Chadians -- not foreigners -- to take control of the political development of the country. The political opposition publicly rejected any proposals that would be directed or controlled by President Deby's GOC. At least one armed opposition group seconded the rejection in a press release. Set next to the opposition's pie-in-the-sky proposals for internationally supervised dismantlement of the Deby State (reftel), it seems that at least one dialogue is now under way -- a dialogue of the deaf. END SUMMARY.

DIALOGUE -- BUT WITH LIMITS

¶2. (SBU) Chad's President Idriss Deby Itno announced to the press on June 8 (through his spokesman) that he had instructed his Council of Ministers to take the initiative for a "Chado-Chadian, internal political dialogue". Presiding over the Council for the first time since his re-election on May 3, Deby stated that the objective of the dialogue would be to allow Chadians -- not foreigners -- to take control of the political development of the country. However, such a dialogue would take as its point of departure the existing institutional framework and "democratic structures".

¶3. (SBU) The President's spokesman, Minister for Communication and Culture Hourmadji Moussa Doumgor, stated to the press that the GOC was to put into place a team charged with preparing the dialogue, with all legal political parties participating. He emphasized that while the dialogue would address "all the questions preoccupying the Republic," there would be no room for calling into question Chad's democratic institutions as they currently exist. He noted that it appeared the opposition party umbrella group, Coordination of the Political Parties for the Defense of the Constitution (CPDC), sought to put aside the country's institutions, in a

sort of leap into the unknown.

¶4. (SBU) The Council of Ministers was reported to have noted that while Chad's foreign partners could be solicited for financial, material and intellectual contributions, there should be no question of them doing for Chad what Chadians can and should do for themselves.

CPDC, FAR -- REJECTION

¶5. (SBU) CPDC spokesman Ibni Oumar Mahamat Saleh (PLD), issued a statement on June 10 rejecting Deby's conception of dialogue. He characterized the proposal as a clear indication to the international community that no true political dialogue would be possible with a regime that is incarnated by one man alone. "We seek national political dialogue with the support and guarantee of the international community." Ngaralejy Yorongar of the non-CPDC member party Federation Action pour la Republique (FAR) joined the CPDC in refusing the President's proposal. He pointed out in his statement to the press that, given Deby's rejection of any genuine political dialogue before the recent election, he saw no reason to accept the President's proposals now. "It's only because of international interest in Chad's conflicts that he (Deby) is offering dialogue."

FUCD -- BACKING THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION

¶6. (SBU) The armed opposition group Front Uni pour le Changement Democratique (FUCD) issued a press statement, also

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on June 10, congratulating the CPDC and FAR for their "highly patriotic positions vis-a-vis Deby Itno's fallacious offer of dialogue..." The FUCD called on Chadians in general, and internal political parties in particular, to actively support the CPDC and FAR in their refusal of the President's proposal, calling the rejection a "definitive turning of the page."

COMMENT:

¶7. (SBU) This public exchange of rejections -- the President's of the CPDC's "leap into unknown", and the CPDC/FAR's of the President's "one-man regime" -- does not seem designed to begin filling the gulf in confidence between the main opposition grouping and the GOC. We expect the President to continue to make announcements of dialogue planning, and the parties allied to his ruling MPS to add their voices. As an example, a hitherto unknown group of 38 parties, calling itself Political Parties of the Alliance, held a press conference June 12 to state their support for the Deby initiative, and to call on the international community to treat them in the same manner as the CPDC. The absence of any GOC attempt to bridge the gap with the political opposition, while creating the impression of "dialogue-like" momentum, may increase pressures on the CPDC members and FAR to simply ally with the armed opposition. The FUCD press statement would give the image that this is already coming together. Far from defusing the political crisis, the move toward dialogue a la Deby seems to have the potential of further alienating the internal political opposition. END COMMENT.

¶8. (U) Tripoli Minimize Considered.
WALL